



Date: December 18, 2018

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Patrick H. West, City Manager 

Subject: **Beach Signage Inventory**

At its July 24, 2018 meeting, the City Council requested that staff provide a report on the inventory of beach and parking lot signage to determine if it is sufficient, and consider changes to sign locations and messages to make them more effective. This memorandum provides a summary of the inventory and proposed City staff actions.

Inventory of Beach Signs

City staff conducted a thorough inventory of the signs in beach parking lots and the beach bicycle and pedestrian path, including noting sign locations and taking photos.

Staff inventoried signs from the 72nd Street Parking Lot (at the end of the Peninsula) to Marina Green, finding a total of 348 signs. Of those signs, 88 display hours of operation (e.g., parking lot or beach hours, parking enforcement hours), 71 are informational (e.g., wayfinding, bike and pedestrian path delineation), 136 display parking restrictions (e.g., handicap restrictions, launch ramp information, EV parking), and 53 display prohibited activities (e.g., no overnight camping, no fires, no alcohol).

After the inventory was completed, representatives from Parks, Recreation and Marine and Public Works Departments, and the City Manager's Office convened to discuss observations and recommendations for improvements to beach signage, based on the inventory and staff experience.

Findings

❖ *Sign Improvements at Citywide Beach Lots are in Process*

In the beach parking lots, staff, in cooperation with the City's Parking Operator, LAZ Parking, LLC (LAZ), is already in the process of installing newer streamlined signs informing users about parking payment procedures, rates, and hours of operation (Figure 1). These signs clearly display a uniform style, consistent with the City's Wayfinding guide. The first phase of these improvements was initiated in September 2018 and was completed in late November 2018. New signs have been installed adjacent to all pay stations in the all the beach parking lots. The second phase includes design, production, and installation of welcome signage upon entry at each beach lot and patron parking instructions throughout. LAZ will have a cost proposal to staff in mid-January 2019 and the second phase is expected to be completed by March 2019. This will alleviate a number of the observed issues with beach signage.

Figure 1 - New Parking Signs (left) are increasing clarity over older signs (right)



❖ *Operating Hours and Prohibited Activities Sign Coverage is Adequate, if not Excessive*

All beach parking lots, bike paths, and pedestrian paths contain signs communicating the hours of use and other prohibited activities at the beach site. Staff often receive complaints from community members that there are too many signs, with sign clutter taking away enjoyment of the beach. Staff also recognize that excessive signage in one area will serve to decrease the likelihood that visitors will actually read each sign.

While the City does have requirements for traffic signs, as well as a Wayfinding Master Plan, none of these apply specifically to beach signs. As a result, signs have, at times, been posted in an ad-hoc fashion, after a specific problem or behavior was identified. This has resulted in sign clutter, often with inconsistent wording or aesthetics. Staff recommend the development of an internal policy for when and where signs should be posted to prevent further sign clutter in the future.

❖ *Sign Content is Inconsistent and Could be Improved*

The wording, location, and design of signs are sometimes inconsistent, both within and across different locations, which could potentially lead to confusion. For example, in the 72nd Place Lot, there are inconsistent postings of beach hours (Figure 2). All other parking lots have consistent posted hours of operation, but often worded in different ways.

Figure 2 – Some signs display inconsistent hours (72nd Street Parking Lot)



Wording and design of posted signs also differ, mostly due to the ad-hoc nature of when signs were put up (Figure 3). Many parking lots lack clear signage at the front of lots showing the exact hours of operation of lots and beaches. Hours of operation for beaches are posted, but often in different locations that are not always intuitive.

Figure 3 – Some signs lack uniform aesthetics



Signs with inconsistent verbiage and formatting creates the impression that signs are not official, which also decreases likelihood of compliance. Additionally, large blocks of text decrease the probability of a visitor taking the time to read an entire sign (Figure 4). To mitigate these challenges, staff recommend consistent use of universally recognizable symbols, akin to the ones on traffic signs, and consistent font and color schemes. This communicates that these are official City signs and improve the chances an individual will read the sign and comply. Some of the most recent signs posted meet some of these requirements (Figure 5).

Figure 4 - Signs with excessive wording (rather than symbols) may lead people to ignore them.



Figure 5 - Consolidated signs with symbols can be more efficient than single signs



Implementation Actions and Timeline

In response to the identified issues, staff will take the following actions (estimated timeframes are included):

1. Continue rollout of new parking operations signs (March 2019)
 - Staff will continue the second phase of parking signs in beach parking lots, as previously described.
2. Develop a standard prohibited activities sign for beach entrances and areas (March 2019)
 - Staff from multiple departments will develop a standard sign that communicates prohibited activities on the beach, including hours of operation. This sign should include:
 - Easily recognized symbols, rather than words, as much as possible
 - Municipal Codes for each prohibited activity to facilitate enforcement

- Consistent theme (including font and colors), coordinated through the City Manager's Communications Office
 - Information specific to the area, coordinated through Marine Bureau and LBPD
 - Staff will also collaborate to determine where signs should be installed.
3. Develop a policy for sign placement (July 2019)
- Staff will develop an internal policy for where signs should be placed and what situations require new or amended signage along the beach. This will prevent the build-up of unnecessary ad-hoc or situational signage.
4. Installation of new signage and removal of outdated signage (as needed)
- As new standardized signs are posted, staff will remove old signs to prevent clutter, conflicting information, and inconsistent aesthetics.

Estimated Costs

Funding for signage upgrades will come from Tidelands Funds. Staff will utilize staff from the Public Works and Parks, Recreation and Marine Departments, and the City Manager's Office. Estimated costs for these actions are as follows:

Action	Signs	Cost (\$)*	Total Cost (\$)	Notes
Prohibited Activities Sign (Printing)	40	50	\$2,000	2 per lot, 4 per mile of beach
Prohibited Activities Sign (Installation)	40	110	\$4,400	2 per lot, 4 per mile of beach
Prohibited Activities Sign Removal	53	144	\$7,632	
Total Cost			\$14,032	

*Costs are estimates

If you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 570-6771.

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